



United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
1803 W HWY 160
Monte Vista, Colorado 81144



FRONT RANGE RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
Great Sand Dunes National Park
July 17 and 18, 2007

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

GROUP 1

Jim Coleman
Chuck Rech
Gene King
Keary Hallack

GROUP 2

Donna Murphy
Aaron Clark
Lucy Bambrey
Tom Olson
Dusty Yeager

GROUP 3

Loren Whittemore
Frances Mathews
Michael Bush
Al Trujillo

Tuesday, July 17

GUESTS: Deron Lawrence, Entrix Co.

BLM/USFS PERSONNEL: Roy Masinton, Roxanne Falise, Ken Smith, Bruce Short.

COUNCIL BUSINESS: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

MANAGERS UPDATE:

Royal Gorge Field Office, Roy Masinton :

3 Peaks Appeal: BLM has proposed a timber project to restore a portion of public lands in the 3 Peaks area near Waugh Mountain using mechanical treatments and prescribed fire. The purpose of this project is to improve forest health, reduce the chances of beetle infestation and reduce the likelihood of a catastrophic wildfire. Colorado Wild appealed the decision challenging BLM's assumption that if the project site was not treated there would be a good chance of a beetle infestation or a large fire. Recently BLM realized they had not issued a Timber Sale Notice in the local newspapers as required in the regulations and asked the IBLA to remand the decision back to the Field Office so the Notice can be published.

Heath Right of Way request update: The Heath case in Boulder was sent back to BLM by the courts. In a letter sent to Mr. Heath, BLM has offered him a right of way with stipulations that will require the applicant to obtain a building permit for construction within a five year timeframe before issuing the authorization to proceed. In addition, a substantial bond for

reclamation will be required. Mr. Heath has appealed this offer (which is not a decision) to IBLA and we are currently awaiting action by the Court.

Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site (PCMS): Tom Warren, Director of Environmental Compliance and Management at Fort Carson, gave a presentation on the PCMS at the May, 2007 RAC meeting. Since then, Colorado Senators Allard and Salazar have become more involved in trying to get additional information from Fort Carson about the proposal. The EIS to analyze the proposal to expand Fort Carson has not been started yet. BLM does not manage a lot of land in the area under discussion for expansion, but it could significantly affect the Commanche National Grassland.

San Luis Valley, Roxanne Falise

Dan Dallas has been hired as the new Forest Supervisor/Center Manager. He will begin August 19. Roxanne will continue to act in those positions until that time.

Travel Management Planning: BLM is close to releasing the Travel Management Plan for public review. There will be a round of public meetings and the EA will be available for the comment period that will begin sometime in August.

Oil and Gas Leases: There are 9 parcels of public land in Conejos County that have been nominated for oil and gas lease sales in early August. They are adjacent to an Area of Environmental Concern that has a strip of no surface occupancy. In this area any drilling would need to be done from the side. Even if the leases are acquired, it is possible they will never be developed. The area does not have a lot of potential.

Review of RAC Standard Operating Procedures:

GSA and the Department of the Interior are requesting all Interior charters be streamlined to 3 pages or less. The excess information being pulled from the Charter will be compiled into a Standard Operating Procedure document, this will be reviewed by the Solicitor's office and does not require the Secretary's signature.

The Council will review the draft Standard Operating Procedures and the Charter and provide Ken Smith any comments by July 24.

Royal Gorge Field Office Update - Joe Vieira,

Arkansas River Travel Management Plan Update: Joe briefly reviewed the alternatives in the plan. Twenty five people attended the public meeting in Salida on June 20 and the Canon City meeting June 21 was attended by 29 people. So far, about 100 comments have been received during the comment period that ends August 3. The Plan is expected to be completed in September or October.

Under the Proposed Action, two areas would be closed to recreational target shooting. Turkey Rock near Howard (approximately 280 acres) would be closed to recreational target shooting

because it receives year round use by competitive trials motorcycle riders; concentrated target shooting here is a serious safety concern. Approximately 2,600 acres of public land bordering subdivisions immediately south of the City of Salida would be closed to target shooting because of public safety concerns arising from proximity to housing developments on private land coupled with large increases in year round recreational use by walkers and mountain bikers. These areas would still stay open to hunting. After some discussion, a motion was made by Donna Murphy and seconded by Gene King for a Resolution to support closing these areas to target shooting. The Resolution(FRRAC 02-07) passed unanimously.

Over the River Update: The Artists delivered a Comprehensive Design Report in April, 2007. Because of prior workload commitments, the Royal Gorge Field Office staff will begin reviewing the Report this fall. The tentative timeline is to competitively bid the Environmental Impact Statement in early 2008 with the EIS being completed in late summer of 2009.

The South Park Land Tenure Adjustment Plan Amendment Update: A public meeting was held on December 13 that began a comment period ending March 1, 2007. The majority of residents and land owners in Park County, who have participated in the planning process, seem to favor BLM retaining management of more public lands in the County. As a result of comments received during the comment period, a fourth Alternative has been added that includes retaining more public land than originally proposed. This Plan Amendment is scheduled to be completed this fall.

Livestock Trespass Along the Rio Grande River Corridor: Melissa Shawcroft, Range Management Specialist at the La Jara Field Office discussed the continuing trespass of livestock from adjacent private lands onto Public Lands in the river corridor. The Public Lands Center is moving forward with possible impoundment of trespass livestock, which will be contentious with the local public. The RAC developed and passed a Resolution (FRRAC 03-07) recommending the BLM take more aggressive measures in preventing livestock trespass on public lands along the Rio Grande.

Kerber Creek Restoration Project: Steve Sanchez, Natural Resource Specialist at the Saguache Field Office, described the mine tailings removal and stream bank stabilization project. The project includes coordinated work on public and private lands funded through BLM, private and grant funds which will be accomplished on 19 miles of the stream in two phases. NEPA is nearly complete and the project will likely start in FY08. Questions from the Committee on water quality and the fishery in Kerber Creek were answered by Steve affirmatively. Water quality and the fishery are showing improvements from past work in the drainage and this project should accelerate that trend.

Trickle Mountain Stewardship Update: Les Dobson, Acting Field Office Manager at Saguache, discussed the progress on the Trickle Mountain Stewardship contract. Field work by

the contractor has been slow but is expected to be complete by June 2008. More combined BLM / Forest Service stewardship contracts are being explored by the Public Lands Center.

The Meeting adjourned for the day at 3:00 p.m. and a field trip to the Extreme Jeep Use area near Del Norte followed.

Wednesday, July 18

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve Presentation; Fred Bunch and Art Hutchinson, NPS: Fred and Art discussed the creation of the Park and Preserve as a National Monument in 1932, the issues leading to its expansion and designation as a National Park and Preserve in 2005, the land purchases and exchanges with the BLM, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Colorado. A field visit was made to the northern part of the Park to see and discuss the access issues with the Baca Grande Subdivision, the Park and the National Forest.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

The next Front Range RAC meeting will be September 26, 2007 in Canon City.

Roy L. Masinton
Royal Gorge Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management

Loren R. Whittemore
Chairman
Front Range Resource Advisory Council